

MINUTES

Standards & Performance Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday 3rd November 2020
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Video Conference

Present:

Sue Lomax (Chair)
Andrew Fawcett (Vice Chair)
Chris Ball
Gill Waugh
Bill Webster (Principal)
Dave Haslam
Rebecca Davison

In Attendance:

Deborah Bradburn (Clerk to the Board)
Mark Burgoyne (Deputy Principal)
Joanne Green (Director of Quality)
Sharon Marriot (Director of Curriculum)
Karen Westsmith (Director of Adults & H.E.)
Tracy Clarke (Director of MIS)
Kate Wallace (Director of Apprenticeships)

1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

1.1 Election of Committee Chair

Members were invited to put forward a nomination and elect a Chair for the Committee.

Mrs Sue Lomax was nominated.

RESOLVED:

Mrs Sue Lomax be elected Chair of the Committee for the current academic year.

1.2 Welcome to Members/Officers

Members were welcomed to the meeting, which commenced at 2.08pm.

(Change in the order of the Agenda)

2. SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

(Change in the order of the Agenda)

2.6 Wellbeing for Learning and Life Strategy

The Director of Quality presented the update with the following points highlighted:

- The College supported 500 vulnerable learners during lockdown and were in a position to review the impact and outcomes of learners.
- Learners that had maintained engagement or completed their studies had resulted in positive impacts and good news stories.

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RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update on well-being for learning and life strategy and congratulated the College on the interventions implemented that had received good levels of response and gave the Committee assurance of the measures in place.

(Change in the order of the Agenda)

2.5 End of Year Survey

The Director of Quality presented the report with the following points highlighted:

- 94% of learners valued the support received from staff.
- 74% of learners found online sessions during lockdown engaging and in the context of online learning this was a good response.
- The College had asked for individual comments on the surveys and staff had responded to those on a one-to-one basis.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

(Change in the order of the Agenda)

2.3 Sub-Contracting Activity Update

The Deputy Principal reported that:

- The College had entered into a subcontracting arrangement with Shockout Arts in September 2019 with the second cohort enrolled in September 2020. A subcontract with Alliance Learning commenced in October 2020.
- The combined contract value was circa £330k.
- Performance boards were established and held bi-monthly to support performance monitoring and intervention.

Governor Questions

How would any safeguarding matters be reported to the College?
Any safeguarding matters followed the established reporting mechanisms.

2.4 Achievement Rates 2019-20 and Performance Targets

The following update was provided by the Deputy Principal and Director of MIS:

- The data presented was before the full and final verification process had been completed. The overall achievement rate was 88.9% an increase of 1.3% on the previous year.
- The 16-18 year old and adult learner achievement rates were better than anticipated and in the context of a lockdown it was a good achievement.
- Community learning had performed well but there had been a reduction in the achievement rate for accredited programmes.
- The year had been challenging and the recommendation was made to maintain the current achievement targets of 89% for 16-18 year old learners, 94% for community learning, 88% for adult learners and 70% for apprenticeships for 2020-21.

(Mrs Gill Waugh joined the meeting at 2.38pm)

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RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the achievement targets for 2020-21 and agreed that it was prudent to maintain the targets set in 2019-20 given the current challenges. It was agreed that they would be recommended to the Board.

ACTION:

Clerk / Board Agenda

(Mr Mark Burgoyne left the meeting at 2.40pm)

(Change in the order of the Agenda)

2.2 Enrolments Overview 2020-21

The Director of MIS presented the report and the following points were noted:

- There had been an additional six enrolments for EFA (Young People) since the report was produced.
- Skills technical and hairdressing enrolments were more than 10% below the recruitment target to date but was still a positive start.
- Adult Class Based (AEB) was currently at 57% of its enrolment target and continued to recruit. AEB tended to have a strong recruitment in January with the majority of enrolments in short courses.
- Following the College's approach to ensuring a COVID-secure learning environment some learners could not digitally engage and the College took the strategic decision to reduce the class sizes to keep learners and staff safe rather than offer blended learning. This was a common approach taken across the sector.
- Higher education recruitment was 117 against the 140 target as opposed to the 128 enrolments reported.
- Learner attendance at the community hub was low. The College would review alternative methods to reach these traditionally hard to reach and digitally disadvantaged learners.

The Committee noted that it was important that the College kept its local authority partners engaged and that funding bodies needed to be more flexible with recruitment targets.

Governor Questions

- How would a 98% achievement target affect funding?
There was an achievement tolerance built into funding. If an organisation had an achievement rate of over 70% there would not be any funding claw back.
- Could trainee teachers support ESOL groups?
Placements for trainee teachers were challenging with trainee teachers defined by the DfE as key workers. The College would explore this further with the University and demonstrated the benefits of the merger.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the Enrolments Overview 2020-21 report.

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ACTION:

Director of Adults and HE and Director of 14-19 to discuss trainee teacher placements with the University.

(Mrs Tracy Clarke left the meeting at 3.00pm)

(Change in the order of the Agenda)

1.3 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Josue Losasa.

1.4 Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any interests in relation to any item on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

1.5 Request for an item to be unstarred

No requests were received.

1.6* Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd June 2020

The minutes of the meeting held 23 June 2020 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

Agreed: that the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

1.7 Matters arising from the previous minutes

The action progress log was presented.

2.1 Progress Reports

(i) HE & Adult

The following update was provided by the Director of Adults & H.E:

- There had been an improvement in adult learner achievement that had increased by 1%, the achievement rate was behind the national rate but an improvement had been made.
- English and maths enrolments contributed to a large amount of adult provision (28%) and outcomes had improved in 2019-20. In 2018-19 the increased GCSE enrolments for adults and reducing functional skills had been built upon, in addition to specifically designed preparation courses in place of L1 functional skills.
- There had been improvement in the delivery of adult learning programmes in 2019-20. The development of key support strategies for adults had been undertaken to support, track, monitor and challenge learners.
- Areas for development would be digital inclusion, digital monitoring and tracking to support personalised progress on all courses that responded to the Greater Manchester agenda for employment, retraining and inclusion.

Governor Questions

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- Could learners re-sit examinations?

Learners could re-sit exams provided that they were well enough and safe enough to come onto site with some learners preferring not to. The College would review alternative ways to complete ECDL. ESOL had been impacted as many learners could not engage digitally.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report and the improvement in GCSEs. The College could look to improve examination achievement and review against the national average.

ACTION:

Director of Adults and HE to review College examination achievement against the national average.

(ii) Community Learning

The following update was provided by the Director of Adults & H.E:

- The progress of delivery against targets for the first quarter of the academic year had been reviewed by Bolton Council's Adult Education Manager. The quarterly report deadlines had been adjusted due to the pandemic and would be completed at the end of November 2020.
- Accredited achievement in 2019-20 was impacted by the lockdown and fell by 6% from the previous year. Retention was the main reason and was down by 4.5% as continuing engagement proved difficult for some learners.
- Those learners that managed to engage with the accredited provision was 10% below national rate. Over 100 of the accredited enrolments were on new functional skills qualifications where a national rate was not yet available.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the information provided in the Community Learning report.

(iii) Apprenticeships

The Group Director of Apprenticeships presented the report with the following points highlighted:

- 16-18 year achievement for 2019-20 was at 72.4%, an increase of 2.2% from 2018-19 and 19+ was at 75.4% achievement this was an increase of 9.5%. Actions had been put in place in addition to quality improvement plans to ensure gaps in achievement were closed.
- The team had worked hard to achieve the practical assessments, some apprentices had 'rolled over' to 2020-21 due to the inability to sit assessments. Five hairdressing apprentices were unable to sit the End Point Assessment and the College was working with the awarding body, City & Guilds.
- Extra incentives were in place for employers who recruited new apprentices, this extra incentive was in place until January 2021.
- In year achievement for 2020-21 was at 24.3%, with 81 withdrawals in 2020-21. There had been an increase in withdrawals over the last 6 months which had had an impact on 2020-21 in year achievement that was being monitored. The majority of the withdrawals had been due to redundancy and the funding rules had not supported apprenticeship continuation as a result of where the apprentice was at the stage of their apprenticeship.

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- Withdrawal surgeries were in place to ensure that funding flexibility was maximised.

Governor Questions

- Were there apprentices that had been furloughed or made redundant?
Businesses had been heavily impacted with some apprentices back from furlough and some made redundant.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the information provided in the Apprenticeship update report and considered it would be useful to have a detailed breakdown of the 81 withdrawals.

ACTION:

Director of Apprenticeships to provide a breakdown of apprenticeship withdrawals.

(iv) Maths and English

The Director of Dir of 14 – 19 presented the report with the following points highlighted:

- It was expected that the prior attainment profile had improved due to reliance on teacher calculated grades in the summer 2020 examinations as a result of the interruption to learning caused by COVID-19.
- Retention in English for all ages improved by 4% against 2018-19 and was 1.67% above national rate. Adult English retention rates showed the most improvement at 6.6% above 2018-19 and fell 1.1% above the national rate.
- The poor achievement rate in functional skills English was a cause for concern and would be reviewed.
- The volume of learners in maths and English teaching had an impact on staff with the outcome to move English and maths tutorials online after the half term break. All GCSE classes would be delivered online.
- Digital poverty was identified as an ongoing issue with circa 260 learners identified as requiring digital support. This could be further considered at the Resources Committee.

The Committee stated that it would be valuable to have Ofsted's view of what was taking place across the sector.

Governor Questions

Was the best way to sustain learning to keep it online?

There were challenges with online learning but the College was in a better position than it was in March 2020 and could defend its strategic decision and position.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the information provided in the Maths and English update report and endorsed the approach taken by the College to underpin continuity of learning.

ACTION:

- Clerk / Resources Committee agenda
- Principal to canvass Ofsted view of sector learning and teaching.

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(Mrs Kate Wallace left the meeting at 3.56pm)

(v) 16 – 19 Study Programmes

The Director of 14 – 19 presented the report with the following points highlighted:

- Enrolment had increased by 2% against target.
- Enrolment of 18 year old learners was higher than the previous year with funding capped at band 4a for 18 year old learners which the College had no control over. Enrolment to bands would be reviewed after the next enrolment cycle to ensure that the band 5 target was achieved.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the information provided in the 16 – 19 Study Programmes update report.

The Committee congratulated and thanked all staff for their hard work, resilience and positive achievements and for the Principal's strong leadership.

3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS - FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

None.

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 20th January 2021 at 2.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 4.01pm